

To: Local Health Department Health Officers, Superintendents of Local and Intermediate School Districts, Public School Academy Directors, and Licensed Daycare Operators

From: Mike Flanagan, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Michigan Department of Education
Janet Olszewski, Director, Michigan Department of Community Health
Marianne Udow, Director, Michigan Department of Human Services

Re: The Immunization Status of Daycare- and School-Aged Children Moving into Michigan as a Consequence of Hurricane Katrina

Date: September 9, 2005

As you know, many families have been displaced from southern states as a consequence of Hurricane Katrina. Some of these families are moving to Michigan, bringing with them daycare- and school-aged students. As you can anticipate, many of the families will lack the most basic necessities, including important documentation, such as immunization records.

We have determined that the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act covers all students living in Michigan as a result of displacement by Hurricane Katrina. The Act stipulates "Students have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if they do not have the required documents, such as school records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documents."

Further, the Act stipulates "If a student does not have immunizations or immunization or medical records, the liaison must immediately assist in obtaining them, and the student must be enrolled in school in the interim. Enrolling schools must obtain school records from the previous school, and students must be enrolled while records are obtained." Please note that liaison, in this instance, means "State Educational Agencies and Local Educational Agencies, otherwise known as school districts," and is also referred to as the Homeless Education Liaison.

While we recognize it will be difficult to obtain immunization information from the affected states for weeks and, potentially, months, we are hopeful that immunization records will be found for these children or if the vaccine record is not found, the children are vaccinated based on the best information available. We want to assure that no children go unprotected against these very serious vaccine preventable diseases.

Schools and daycare centers will have the ability to document on the MCIR Student Information Screen that the child entered the program under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The Homeless Education Liaison, along with the local health department, will attempt to find the immunization record of the student, and if not found,

initiate vaccination at either the health department or the student's (new) primary care provider's office.

We are currently investigating whether we might be able to waive Section 167 of the School Aid Act, the School Code and Public Health Code to allow for extenuating circumstances so schools are not penalized on the basis of low or incomplete immunization compliance rates. We will supply you with that information as we receive it.

The Michigan Department of Community Health, in conjunction with the Michigan Departments of Education and Human Services, have partnered with the immunization registries in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi in an effort to retrieve immunization records of individuals who have relocated to Michigan. We will post information on how to obtain immunization records for children who have been re-located due to the hurricane on the www.MCIR.org website in the near future.

It is our intent to make the transition of students displaced by Hurricane Katrina into Michigan's daycare centers and schools as seamless as possible. We appreciate your willingness to be a part of that effort.